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BELFAST MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

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COMMUNICATIONS, ORIGINAL AND SELECTED.

To the Proprietors of the Belfast Magazine.

I TRANSMIT you for insertion in your pages, if you consider it deserving of a place in them, an extract from a manuscript, of an excursion through a part of this province, in December. Should the present fragment meet your approbation, I shall send you in continuation, some observations on the village of Gracehill, and its academy.

I am yours, &c.

Z.

AND here I cannot avoid noting down some reflections, and observations, which arose out of the circumstance of my having, when last in this part of the country, beheld the superb edifice erected by the late Earl of Bristol, on the banks of Lough Neagh, with an aspect so different from its present one : the day was cold and dreary, and as I rode along towards the ferry over which I intended to go, a train of solemn feelings passed across my mind; which were kept alive by reflection, and contemplation of the surrounding scenery.

On beholding this once noble edifice, now a roofless turret, forming a lonely object in the wintry landscape, memory held up her tablet, glowing with scenes of former days. About ten years ago, I had contemplated this magnificent pile ; costly in the embellishments of art ; stored with the choicest efforts of the statuary's chisel, and the painter's pen-

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cil. I had been within its walls. I had feasted my eyes with pleasure and satisfaction on the assemblage of its silent beauties. Whatever was superb in ornament, or classical in design, had lent its aid to embellish this lordly dome. Eccentricity dictated the plan; opulence furnished the materials; and art completed the majestic structure. I well recollect the impression that was then made on my taste and fancy. I had not before been gratified with the view of so much elegance; and though I have since inspected some of the first collections of painting in Europe, and the finest specimens of architecture, yet this building suffers nothing by comparison, particularly as a private residence : as such it was splendid indeed.

A massy pediment, supported by giant columns, bore, in relief, an appropriate inscription from the Odyssey. The temple was circular; and round a frieze at the top, was inscribed those lines, from the 4th Georgic of Virgil :

“ In viridi campo, templum de marmore
ponam,” &c. &c.

alluding to the situation. I was then in company with some interesting and amiable young ladies, who yet remember with pleasure our romantic excursion. I was struck with the abrupt grandeur with which it rose in the midst of a wild waste. At that time its lordly founder slumbered in the dust; the mitre nor the crown shields not the heads of its wearers : the time of its own decease was then

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at hand : and I remember, whilst we were gazing on the beauties of its apartments, the *keenagh*, or aboriginal requiem of the native Irish, resounded through the edifice : a funeral passing at the time, produced a sublime and solemn effect ; and through the medium of a romantic imagination, may appear to memory as if prophetic of its fall. Thus does the poet's fancy linger near a spot where he once enjoyed delight, and where the harp of Eolus abounding in sadness, had impressed on his ear, tones that foreboded a long separation from the place he loved. The summer then spread his rich mantle over nature, the landscape smiled ; it then towered, the noblest object of the surrounding scenery. Now, the landscape lowered in frowning shade, winter wrapped the form of creation close in his hoary vestment ; it stood a shapeless ruin in the melancholy waste, with its tenantless apartments open to the winds of heaven, with nothing left but its massy walls to tell that there once resided splendid opulence.

"I saw the walls of Balclutha, and they were desolate ; the fox looked out of his place, and the thistle shook its grey beard in the wind." But thus must fall the turrets of ambition, and moulder into dust, like the clay, to which when animated they afforded a transient satisfaction !

Such were my reflections. I shall add the subjoined, as they were elicited, by considering the use of riches : as we study their application in the hands of the lineally opulent, or the man who receives them as the usual appendage of rank and title.

The late Bishop of Derry was that kind of being whom we may denominate an eccentric. He had a taste, or *rage* as I shall call it, for pictorial study, and had been much abroad. He built Ballyskullen house,

but did not reside there. I was told that the whole, cost nearly £100,000 ; but I may have been misinformed. However a very large sum was expended by him on this spot ; he designed it perhaps for a monument of his taste and wealth ; it might have remained one of his *folly* ; now it adorns as a ruin, a wild but not a picturesque landscape. He gave, it is true, employment by erecting this building to many surrounding poor ; this had its use, and was felt, *pro tempore* ; but how much was wasted in foreign ornaments ? given to foreign artists ? Let a rich man and a *divine*, cherish the tender plant of education in a soil where its early buds are often nipped by the frost of penury ; let him gratify the more exalted feelings of his nature, by bestowing his cumbrous wealth on the amelioration of *society within the circle of his influence*, not by erecting massy repositories of useless grandeur, to be the gaze of the million for a few transient years ; let him thus act, and he will prove himself a *genuine* follower of him who said, "Go, and do thou likewise."

Calmly rests the benevolent Howard ! Deep were my sensations when in the sublime temple of St. Paul, I wet his monument with tears of which I am proud to boast : He *was* the brother of his race ! How poor to the hairs that shaded his revered temples, appears the consecrated mitre or the ducal coronet ; his hallowed remains though trodden under Paynim footsteps, are embalmed by the tears of the widow and the orphan, christian as well as mahometan. The breath of contagion laid him low, though the fiend of pestilence, horrible as was its aspect, was unable to appal his placid spirit, resolute in well doing. The stately pillar may rise to show where its builder slumbers ; but

the name of the true philanthropist is of itself a monument more durable than brass:

I have been conversing with some friends on subjects which led to these remarks. There has been a stupid maxim, "*de mortuis nil nisi bonum*"—'tis false: a great man at his decease only begins to live; his wealth was given him as a sacred deposit, to be improved according to his talents or opportunities, this undone, he ought to live in remembrance, but unwept by the poet, unsung by the minstrel. His memory should be a picture for the observer of character to study, its faults should be marked by the pen of the satyr, and the canvas that represents his deeds ought to stand unvarnished in the temple of history. The truly and actively good man, seeks for no eulogy, his virtues are his monument; his grave is bedewed with the tears of sensibility. The great man frivolous in himself, though fond of fame, wishes to acquire it, but then, "*By'r lady he must build churches, and then there are hopes that a great man's memory may outlive his life half a year.*"

I have said the prelate was an eccentric, he would probably be grieved were he now to see the house built by him in ruins; but he admired ruins. I am told, that he said of his lady, from whom I believe he was separated, "*that she was a fine old ruin!*" being more advanced in years than himself.

No man has it in his power to do more local good than an opulent prelate of the established church; many among them were, and are ornaments of human nature, and luminaries of erudition. Porteus and Watson, are names which will be ever dear to their country.

It is said, that the Earl was an admirer (I shall not say a votary) of

the laughter loving dame. In his bed-room I saw a picture of the Cytherean Queen, sufficient to warm the bosom of age, or kindle into flame the desire of youth: I shall note an anecdote of this room. An old woman a walking index to the pictures and furniture, pointing to a picture exquisitely finished, but which explained itself, illustrated it in the plainest manner; ladies were present, and it had a more than awkward effect. The composition was not *immodest* though *warm*, but her explanation of it, though not *warm*, was *immodest*. In fine the Earl loved the ladies, or rather liked their angelic forms; poor man his heart was tender, few there are, who even with the shield of devotion, can repel or arrest the arrows of beauty.

However it is better for a bishop to be a lover than a glutton; but I hope there is not one to be found who resembles the picture sketched by Molcroft in Hugh Trevor. Slight failings are too often observed with severity in the clergy, who, it ought to be remembered are but mortal. A rational christian ought well to know, that our religion deprives us of not one gratification compatible with our physical natures, or the dignity of our rational part. It enjoins the *regulation* of the *passions*, not their *extinction*; moderation, not penance, and the wretched votaries of monkish seclusion, or religious restriction of any kind, are perhaps the greatest enemies of that religion which they attempt to advocate. I shall thus conclude this expression of sentiment, to which the subject led me.

There is a way in which the sons of hereditary wealth or acquired opulence: the nobleman, the divine, the squire: how many children of genius, waste their infancy and their youth, without a friend to direct their steps in the way of emulation; to point out to their anxious eye the

distant temple of fame ! How many opening blossoms of mental excellence close their delicate calices, and droop their heads in oblivion, or in death, uncheered by the genial sun of patronage ; or are trodden into the dust, under the foot of purse-proud ignorance ! To transplant such valuable, but neglected flowers, from the frigid soil where they but rise above its surface : to place them in the temperature of animating protection, there to develop their latent beauties : to nurse their fragile stems, leaning against the prop of pecuniary assistance, until the tender plant becomes a magnificent ornament of the garden that cherished it ; pleasing the eye of taste ; delighting the philosophic mind. To do this, I say, is a task worthy of the noblest birth, the most ample possessions. This brings with it a reward more precious than the gems of Golconda ; this presents to the *pure and refined sense*, an offering, sweeter than the fragrance of the orange-tree, that delights the mariner on the Lusitanian coast ! An incense too refined for the vulgar mind : a pleasure too great to be enjoyed by those senseless beings whom nature fashions every day, and “sends forth a million such ashamed of her work.”

To the Proprietors of the Belfast Magazine.

GENTLEMEN,

THE following tale I met with in the original ; I thought it pretty, and the moral of it pleased me. It has, I think, the merit of simplicity, and comes quickly to its point. It would be in vain to pretend, that I have given it an English dress equal to its Italian one ; but I will not affect to say, that I have taken no pains with it. A free translation, and a real English idiom, were my

objects. Every one accustomed to translate, must have found, that when he has revised his performance, he has been disappointed and grieved, to find, in almost every sentence, expressions and turns of phrase, that do not belong so much to his native language, as to that from which he has translated. This I have endeavoured to avoid : how far I have succeeded, others must judge. If the story suits your miscellany, your insertion of it will oblige,

Yours, &c.

C.E.

THE PUNISHMENT OF REVENGE ;

A Story, from the Italian.

AT the time when a great part of Italy was divided into a number of small republics, intrigues of various kinds, and petty wars were very frequent among them. The disgraceful passions of envy, hatred, and private revenge, were the principal causes of these disturbances. At that period, there existed a mortal enmity between Guido, a native of Lucca, and Guicciardo, a Florentine ; the former was a Captain in his country's service, the latter was Governor of the town of Samminiato. Whatever might have been the origin of their violent enmity, the fact is, that they endeavoured on every occasion to injure each other, and esteemed themselves fortunate in any opportunity of accomplishing so unworthy an object. But how short-sighted is the misguided mind of man ! *Nescia mens hominum fati sortisque futuræ, et servare modum, rebus sublata secundis !* How far are his schemes of vengeance from being the dictates of true policy ! These men had each of them a son, who was the object of his most violent affection. The youths, during their residence at Pisa, had conceived for each other a strong and disinterested friendship. Frequent